**HARC1009: Bollywood and Beyond**

**Response Assignment #2**

**Due at the beginning of class on Monday, 12 January**

So far, in *Shri 420* and *Mother India* “history” and relative inequalities of power have played a dominant narrative role. In *Mughal-E-Azam*, history is again a dominant theme, but this time the narrative centers on a purported romance between the 16th c. Mughal emperor Akbar’s son and heir-apparent, Salim (1605-27; later to be known as Jahangir, “World-Seizer”).

The Mughal period is prime territory for mining the topic of Mughal-Hindu relations and the differences between religions and culture. The reign of Emperor Akbar, who is known for his ecumenical approach to ruling his new kingdom, has long been the focus of many artistic reconsiderations of the past. Moreover, the opportunities and inspirations for spectacular stage-setting are especially abundant given the extraordinarily beautiful art and architecture of the Mughal period.

\*the only *required* readings for the whole class this topic are Kasbekar and Levich, which provide short background information. Depending upon the topic you choose below, you will be reading either the Chakravarty and Nandy selections.

Please choose ONE topic to write a response of 500-750 words.

1. I would like you read the selection by Chakravarty, who claims “The Bombay film has not so much addressed the Hindu-Muslim relationship as sublimated it by displacing it onto the canvas of history” (165). What does she mean by this? What can a “historical” film do that other types of films cannot? Pick a moment from the film *not* described by Chakravarty and provide an analysis that illustrates at least one of her points about the film.

2. Read the selection by Nandy about his memories of the importance of Indian films during his childhood in Britain. He notes that, “Indian films were . . . much more than entertainment—they were a source of contemplation, as well as a reservoir of aesthetic and cultural values. They brought different elements of the community together and through this adhesive offered the prospect of rising above the dilemmas the subcontinent has not resolved.” (22) What did he find meaningful about the film? Why does he say that “The symbolic and metaphoric content of a ghazal makes it particularly amenable to visualization.”? (26) Choose a moment in the film to analyze the way poetry, song, and/or dance “are used to make narrative points and to move the story forward.” 28)

3. I would like you read the selection by Chakravarty to begin to analyze some aspect of the visual spectacle of this “historical” film. Some things you might think about: How is the “past” visually recreated? How are public and private scenes differentiated? What role does architecture and scene-setting play in advancing the narrative? How are the romantic scenes envisioned? It might be useful for you to familiarize yourself with some examples of Mughal painting and the architecture of Fatehpur Sikri at these websites:

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/mugh_2/hd_mugh_2.htm>

<http://www.bl.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/prevexhib/mughalindia//>

[http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/objects?exhibitionId={99B887BE-25AE-4249-9D3B-3C2EC0C3D536}&pg=1&rpp=30](http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/objects?exhibitionId=%7b99B887BE-25AE-4249-9D3B-3C2EC0C3D536%7d&pg=1&rpp=30)

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/255>